

Driving Opportunities: BETTER HEALTH OUTCOMES



Ending driver's license suspension for unpaid traffic tickets and missed court dates in North Carolina is a common-sense reform that cannot wait.

The Opportunity

Nearly 1 million North Carolinians have a suspended driver's license, not because they are unsafe drivers, but because they cannot afford to pay traffic fines and fees or missed a court date. In a rural state such as North Carolina, a driver's license is key for mobility and opportunity. Ending unnecessary license suspensions will improve access to employment, healthcare, stability, and overall well-being.

Why It Matters

Driver's Licenses Expand Access to Health Care

- ▶ Reliable transportation improves access to medical care, helping individuals reach appointments, pharmacies, specialists, and urgent care when needed.
- ▶ Stable employment—supported by a valid driver's license—enhances health by enabling people to maintain insurance, manage chronic conditions, and afford essentials like nutritious food and safe housing
- ▶ Children in low-income homes often miss or do not schedule a medical appointment when families do not have reliable transportation.

Driver's Licenses Support Physical and Mental Wellbeing

- ▶ With a valid driver's license, people get to work, childcare, court, and healthcare obligations without increased stress and anxiety of driving without a license.
- ▶ When older adults continue driving legally, they maintain stronger cognitive and physical abilities, stay connected to their communities, and are more likely to remain independent longer.

The Evidence-Based Reforms

North Carolina must act to improve opportunity and improve rates of payment and court appearance.

- ▶ End driver's license suspensions for unpaid traffic debt and missed court dates; and
- ▶ Replace with evidence-based practices such as court reminders, ability-to-pay assessments, and reasonable payment plans.

For more information, contact **Laura Webb**, laura@ncjustice.org